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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 12-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Applicants amend the Title of the Invention, the Abstract of the Disclosure and claims 12-15 and 20.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claim 20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Abstract of the Disclosure was objected to for not being directed to the claimed invention. Applicants have amended the Abstract of the Disclosure to be directed to the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection.

The Title of the Invention was objected to for not being descriptive. Applicants have amended the Title of the Invention so as to be descriptive of the present claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection.

Claims 12 and 20 were objected to for containing minor informalities. Applicants have amended claims 12 and 20 to correct the minor informalities noted by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection.

Claims 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for allegedly being indefinite. Applicants have amended claims 13-15 to correct the informalities noted by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 12 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Daidai et al. (U.S. 5,593,721). Claims 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Daidai et al. Claims 16-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Daidai et al. in view of Applicants' Admitted Prior Art (AAPA). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

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Claim 12 has been amended to recite:

"A method of manufacturing a piezoelectric component, comprising the steps of:

forming an unhardened first elastic material partially on at least a pair of end portions of a piezoelectric element, the pair of end portions including an edge portion of the piezoelectric element;

hardening the first elastic material;

forming an unhardened second elastic material on an entire circumference of the piezoelectric element and the first elastic material;

hardening the second elastic material; and

forming an unhardened outer-cladding resin on the entire circumference of the second elastic material covering the piezoelectric element and the first elastic material; and

hardening the outer-cladding resin." (emphasis added)

With the unique combination of features and method steps recited in Applicants' claim 12, including the feature of "forming an unhardened first elastic material partially on at least a pair of end portions of a piezoelectric element, the pair of end portions including an edge portion of the piezoelectric element" and "hardening the first elastic material," Applicants have been able to provide a method of manufacturing a piezoelectric component which greatly reduces the stress generated in the piezoelectric element by the outer-cladding resin while maintaining the function of damping the piezoelectric element (see, for example, the first full paragraph on page 3 of the originally filed specification).

The Examiner alleged that Daidai et al. teaches each and every feature and method step recited in claim 12, including a steps of "forming an unhardened first elastic material 10 partially on at least a pair of end portions of a piezoelectric element 1, the pair of end portions including an edge portion of the piezoelectric element" and "hardening the first elastic material." Applicants respectfully disagree.

Contrary to the Examiner's allegations, as clearly seen in Figs. 1A-1D of Daidai et al., the organic silicon compound 10, which the Examiner alleged corresponds to the first elastic material recited in Applicants' claim 12, is formed at only a central region

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of the piezoelectric element 1 so as to cover the vibrating electrodes 3a and 3b. The organic silicon compound 10 is clearly NOT formed on either of the end portions of the piezoelectric element 1, and certainly is NOT formed on end portions including an edge portion of the piezoelectric element. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Daidai et al. clearly fails to teach or suggest the feature of "forming an unhardened first elastic material partially on at least a pair of end portions of a piezoelectric element, the pair of end portions including an edge portion of the piezoelectric element" as recited in Applicants' claim 12.

Daidai et al. specifically discloses that the piezoelectric element 1 includes the piezoelectric substrate 2 and the vibrating electrodes 3a and 3b. Since the vibrating electrodes 3a and 3b are disposed only at a central portion of the piezoelectric element as clearly seen in Fig. 2 of Daidai et al., the organic silicon compound 10 which is provided so as to cover the vibrating electrodes 3a and 3b clearly cannot be fairly construed as being formed on at least a pair of end portions of a piezoelectric element, the pair of end portions including an edge portion of the piezoelectric element as recited in Applicants' claim 12.

In addition, as clearly seen in Fig. 1(C) and disclosed in col. 4, lines 43-46 of Daidai et al., the organic silicon compound 10 "is dispersed [or evaporated] to the outside through the film 11, thereby a cavity 12 is formed around the vibrating electrodes 3a and 3b, as shown in FIG. 1(C)." In other words, contrary to the Examiner's allegations, the organic silicon compound 10, which the Examiner alleged corresponds to the first elastic member recited in Applicants' claim 12, is dispersed or evaporated so as to create the cavity 12 around the vibrating electrodes 3a and 3b, NOT hardened. Therefore, Daidai et al. clearly fails to teach or suggest the feature of "hardening the first elastic material" as recited in Applicants' claim 12.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Daidai et al.

The Examiner has relied upon AAPA to allegedly cure deficiencies of Daidai et

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al. However, AAPA clearly fails to teach or suggest the features of "forming an unhardened first elastic material partially on at least a pair of end portions of a piezoelectric element, the pair of end portions including an edge portion of the piezoelectric element" and "hardening the first elastic material" as recited in Applicants' claim 12. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that AAPA fails to cure the deficiencies of Daidai et al. described above.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Daidai et al. and AAPA, applied alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the unique combination and arrangement of elements recited in Applicants' claim 12.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 12 is allowable. Claims 13-20 depend upon claim 12, and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons that claim 12 is allowable.

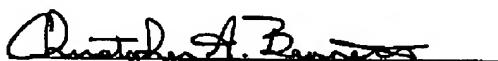
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are solicited.

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The Commissioner is authorized to charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1353.

Respectfully submitted,

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